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FOR: USE OF POLY-ALPHA2,8-SIALIC ACID MIMETIC PEPTIDES TO MODULATE NCAM FUNCTIONS

**REQUEST FOR PRIORITY UNDER 35 U.S.C. 119
AND THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION**

Commissioner for Patents
Alexandria, Virginia 22313

Sir:

In the matter of the above-identified application for patent, notice is hereby given that the applicant claims as priority:

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Certified copies of the corresponding Convention application(s) were submitted to the International Bureau in PCT Application No. PCT/IB03/05108. Receipt of the certified copy(s) by the International Bureau in a timely manner under PCT Rule 17.1(a) has been acknowledged as evidenced by the attached PCT/IB/304.

Respectfully submitted,
OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.

Surinder Sachar

Norman F. Oblon
Attorney of Record
Registration No. 24,618
Surinder Sachar
Registration No. 34,423

Customer Number

22850

(703) 413-3000
Fax No. (703) 413-2220
(OSMMN 08/03)

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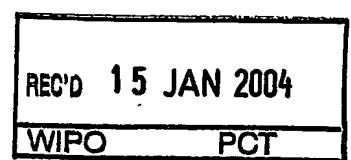
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Anmelder/Applicant(s)/Demandeur(s):

CENTRE NATIONAL DE
LA RECHERCHE SCIENTIFIQUE (CNRS)
3, rue Michel Ange
75794 Paris Cedex 16
FRANCE

Université de la Méditerranée - Aix-
Marseille II

58, boulevard Charles Livon,
Jardin du Pharo
13007 Marseille
FRANCE

Schafer-N
Fruebjergvej 3
2100 Copenhagen
DANEMARK

Universität Hamburg
Falkenried 94
20251 Hamburg
ALLEMAGNE

Bezeichnung der Erfindung/Title of the invention/Titre de l'invention:
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Poly-alpha2,8-sialic acid mimetic peptides and their application

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POLY- α 2,8-SIALIC ACID MIMETIC PEPTIDES AND THEIR APPLICATION.

The invention relates to poly- α 2,8-sialic acid (PSA) mimetic peptides able to modulate specifically PSA-dependent NCAM functions *in vitro* and *in vivo*, to pharmaceutical composition comprising the same and to their use for the treatment of neurodegenerative diseases, brain and spine lesions, age-related learning and memory problems, and cancer.

The ability of cell to modify its cell surface interactions with other cells, including neurons and glial cells, is a critical component of nervous tissue development, remodelling and repair, as well as tumor formation and metastasis. Among many candidate molecules that are potentially involved in such a process, isoforms of the neural cell adhesion molecule (NCAM), a member of the IgG superfamily, carrying an unconventional carbohydrate polymer, poly- α 2,8-sialic (PSA), are of particular interest.

PSA is composed of negatively charged N-acetylneuraminic acid (sialic acid) residues in an alpha 2,8 linkage. Single PSA chain may consist of more than 50 monomers, but the chain length may vary substantially in NCAM isolated from various sources (Rougon et al., Eur. J. Cell. Biol., 1993a, 61, 197-207). Studies using NMR microscopy indicate that PSA has a helical structure in solution consisting of eight or more contiguous sialic acid units (Rougon et al., 1993a, precited; Yamasaki et al. 1991). PSA has a large hydrated volume and high negative charge density, and therefore is well placed to attenuate adhesion forces and to negatively regulate overall cell surface interactions (Rutishauser et al., Science, 1988, 240, 53-57).

All the known alternatively spliced isoforms of NCAM can be polysialylated at the fifth Ig-like domain (Rougon et al., 1993a, precited) and NCAM is the only clearly identified carrier of polysialic acid in the nervous system (Rougon et al., J. Cell. Biol., 1986, 103, 2429-2437). Although, there is one report describing the association of PSA with the α chain of the Na channel (Zuber et al., J. Biol. Chem., 1992, 267, 9965-9971), the absence of PSA immunoreactivity in NCAM knock-out mice (Cremer et al., Nature, 1994, 367, 455-457) suggests that NCAM is the major if not the only carrier of PSA in vertebrate brain.

The attachment of PSA to NCAM is a developmentally regulated process; NCAM with high PSA content is associated with morphogenetic changes during development such as cell migration, synaptogenesis and axonal growth and branching, while in adult brain poorly sialylated forms of NCAM are dominating
5 (Rougon et al., *Polysialic Acid*, 1993b, Roth J.R., Rutishauser U. and Troy F. A. (eds),
Birkhauser-Verlag: Basel, 323-333; Rutishauser et al, 1998, precited; Edelman et al.,
Annu. Rev. Cell. Biol., 1986, 2, 81-116). However, PSA-NCAM does persist in adult
brain structures that display a high degree of plasticity (Rougon et al., 1993a,
precited). For example, PSA-NCAM is required for two essential forms of activity-
10 induced synaptic plasticity, long-term potentiation (LTP) and long-term depression
(LTD), that are believed to be central to learning and memory as well as activity-
dependent pattern formation during development. (Muller et al, Neuron, 1996, 17,
413-422). Indeed, hippocampal tissue prepared from the NCAM mutant mice
exhibited a markedly reduced capacity for LTP as well as LTD and this defect could
15 be mimicked by the enzymatic destruction of the PSA moiety of NCAM. These obser-
vations indicate that PSA rather than the NCAM protein is required for plasticity.
Morphological plasticity occurring in the hypothalamo-neurohypophyseal system
(Theodosis et al., J. Neurosci., 1999, 19, 10228-10236) is also dependent upon the
presence of PSA as *in vivo* injection of endoneuraminidase prevents it.

20 PSA-NCAM is re-expressed in several pathological situations such
as muscle regeneration (Figarella-Branger et al., Cancer Res., 1990, 50, 6364-6370) or
brain neurodegenerative diseases (Le Gal La Salle et al., J. Neurosci., 1992, 12, 872-
882). Based on these observations, PSA-NCAM emerged as an important permissive
25 factor for dynamic changes in cell surface interactions required for morphogenesis and
tissue remodelling (Rougon et al., 1993b, precited; Figarella-Branger, 1993;
Rutishauser, Development, 1992, 99-104).

30 Many tumors with neural and endocrine characteristics expressed
PSA-NCAM. For example, PSA-NCAM had been detected in neuroblastomas and
medulloblastomas (Figarella-Branger et al., precited), small cell carcinoma of the lung
(Patcl et al., Int. J. Cancer, 1989, 44, 573-578) and rhabdomyosarcomas, and is possi-
bly related to the invasive and metastatic potential of these tumors (Rougon et al.,

1993b, precited). Recently, injection of neuraminidase into a nude mouse model for metastasis showed that removal of PSA on the primary tumor delayed metastasis. (Daniel et al, Oncogene, 2001, 20, 997-1004).

Thus, the molecule PSA-NCAM and more precisely the carbohydrate PSA represents one of the potential targets of future therapeutic approaches to promote plasticity and functional recovery after brain damage or to prevent metastasis formation.

Therefore, several strategies have been developed to modulate PSA functions :

- genetic manipulations : NCAM or polysialyltransferase knock-out mice (Cremer et al., precited) : this strategy does not open perspective for therapy,

- enzymatic digestion : endoneuraminidase (Theodosis et al., precited; Daniel et al., precited): its therapeutic potential is rather limited owing to its large size and restricted diffusion *in vivo* and to the possibility of inducing an immune response,

- anti-PSA monoclonal antibodies (Monnier et al., Developmental Biology, 2001, 229, 1-14) ; their therapeutic potential is rather limited owing to their antibody nature,

- Colominic acid, a PSA analog isolated from bacterial capsule; its therapeutic potential is rather limited owing to its instability at acidic pH and to the impossibility to control its exact composition in terms of purity and homogeneity (calibration of the sialic acid chain length, from one batch to another),

- N-butanoylmannosamine (ManBut), a small molecule capable of inhibiting PSA biosynthesis *in vitro* (Mahal et al., Science, 2001, 294, 380-382); its activity has not been demonstrated *in vivo*.

However, to date these strategies which have been used to uncover mechanisms of action or functions of PSA, have not led to the discovery of new drugs able to modulate PSA functions *in vivo*.

Therefore, there is a need for new molecules able to modulate specifically PSA-dependent NCAM functions *in vivo*, which can be used as pharmaceutical compositions for promoting plasticity and functional recovery after brain or

spine damage or for preventing metastasis.

Surprisingly, the inventors have isolated peptides which are molecular mimetics of a PSA epitope and they have demonstrated that these PSA mimetic peptides are able to modulate (enhance or inhibit), *in vivo*, in a PSA-dependent manner, cellular processes that are normally affected by polysialylation of NCAM. For example, the inventors have demonstrated a significant effect of the PSA mimetic peptides, *in vivo*, on axons growth, guidance and fasciculation as well as on neurons migration.

These PSA mimetic peptides which are active *in vivo* at low doses (μM concentration) and do not exhibit any cytotoxicity are useful for:

- the treatment of neurodegenerative diseases (Parkinson, Huntington or chorea, Alzheimer, multiple sclerosis): they are useful as adjuvants for cell therapy ; graft of neuronal progenitors (expressing PSA) in combination with PSA mimetic peptides would enhance significantly progenitors migration and axon outgrowth in the damaged areas of the brain,

- the treatment of brain and spine lesion: they would promote functional recovery after brain or spine damage by increasing axon survival and regeneration,

- the prevention and treatment of age-related learning and memory problems: they would promote nervous system plasticity by increasing neurogenesis and/or synaptic plasticity,

- the treatment of cancer: they would prevent metastasis formation by inhibiting cell migration from PSA expressing tumors, for example neuroectodermic tumors.

In addition to said therapeutic use, the PSA mimetic peptides are useful as complementary tools to uncover mechanisms of action and unknown functions of the carbohydrate PSA.

The present invention relates to a peptide, characterized in that it comprises a B epitope recognized by an anti-poly- α 2,8 sialic acid (PSA) antibody.

The "B epitope recognized by an anti- PSA antibody" refers to a peptide which reacts specifically and selectively, *in vitro* and *in vivo*, with the paratope

of an antibody produced by lymphoid cells in response to a stimulation with poly- α 2,8 sialic acid as an immunogen. Anti-PSA antibodies prepared by standard techniques, following protocols as described for example in *Antibodies : A Laboratory Manual, E. Howell and D Lane, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, 1988* are well-known in the art; they include, without limitation, monoclonal antibodies 735 (Frosch et al., P.N.A.S;1985, 82, 1194-1198), 30H12 (Coquillat et al., Infect. Immun., 2001, 69, 7130-7139) or MenB (ABCYS AbC0019).

According to the invention, the peptide comprising or consisting of a B epitope as defined above presents a sequence consisting of 5 to 30 amino acid residues, preferably 9 to 15, most preferably about 12 amino acid residues.

The invention includes linear and cyclic peptides.

Preferred cyclic peptides according to the invention comprise peptides in which the side chain of one amino acid in the peptide chain is attached covalently to the side chain of another amino acid in the peptide chain via formation of a covalent bond, such as a disulfide bond between two cysteine residues.

The peptides according to the invention refer to peptides which have the following activities:

- antibody binding activity: they are recognized specifically by an anti-PSA monoclonal or polyclonal antibody, and

- biological activity: they have the activity of modulating (enhancing or inhibiting) PSA-dependent NCAM functions.

The peptides according to the invention are denominated hereafter PSA mimetic peptides, mimetic peptides or peptides.

The mimetic peptides antibody-binding activity is verified by standard immunoassay which are well-known by a person skilled in the art; for example, 100 % peptide binding is observed at concentrations of 10^{-4} M and above in an ELISA with an anti-PSA monoclonal antibody at the concentration of 2,5 µg/well, and this antibody binding activity is specifically inhibited by a PSA analog such as colominic acid.

The mimetic peptides biological activity is verified by standard cell growth and cell migration assays *in vitro* or *in vivo*, which are well-known by a person

skilled in the art; for example, assays on primary neurons from different sources (dorsal root ganglion, cerebellar neurons, retina, ...) show the following effects:

- a significant dose dependent increase of neurite length *in vivo* and *in vitro*,

5 - a significant effect on axonal guidance *in vivo* and *in vitro* (axons defasciculation), and

- a significant increase or inhibition of cell migration.

The mimetic peptide biological activity is specifically inhibited by enzymatic digestion with endoneuraminidase and is absent in NCAM knock-out mice.

10 According to an advantageous embodiment of the invention, said peptide comprises a sequence which is selected from the group consisting of the sequences SEQ ID NO: 1 to 26, corresponding respectively to DSPLVPFIDFHP, LWQPPLIPGIDF, QIEPWFTPEDFP, TRLAPLVFPLDY, SWLQMPWALVRT, EIHLRMIKQITI, WHLEYMWWRWPRL, LIEQRLPKHILT, YETSSSRLLAYA, 15 TLASQLSNTSAY, SDQGVNGWSNP, WHNWNLWAPASPT, WHWQWTPWSIQP, IKSPLTWLVPPD, SHLDLSTGHRTS, CYPLNPEVYHCG, CWPLSHSVIVCG, CSSVTAWTTGCG, CYMASGVFLCG, CWPLGPSTYICG, CSLIASMETGCG, CSKIASMETGCG, CYIGDPPFNPCG, CWPLGDSTVICG CPLRLAFTFGCG and CTRMSHGYWICG.

20 The invention also includes any functional derivative of the peptides as defined above, comprising one or more modifications which do not affect substantially the antibody binding and biological activities of the initial peptide.

Such modifications include for example: addition and/or deletion and/or substitution of one or more amino acid residue in the peptide chain, and/or 25 replacement of one or more of the amide bond by a non-amide bond, and/or replacement of one or more amino acid side chain by a different chemical moiety, and/or protection of the N-terminus, the C-terminus, or one or more of the side chain by a protecting group, and/or introduction of double bonds and/or cyclization and/or stereospecificity into the amino acid chain to increase rigidity, and/or binding affinity and/or 30 enhance resistance to enzymatic degradation of the peptides. Since all the variations are known in the art, it is submitted that a person skilled in the art will be able to

produce, test, identify and select other peptides/epitopes according to the present invention.

For instance, it is possible to substitute amino acids by equivalent amino acids. "Equivalent amino acid" is used herein to name any amino acid that may substitutes for one of the amino acids belonging to the initial peptide structure without modifying the antibody binding and biological activities of the initial peptide structure. These equivalent amino acids may be determined by their structural homology with the initial amino acids to be replaced and by their biological activity on the target cells of the peptides according to the invention. As an illustrative example, it should be mentioned the possibility of carrying out substitutions like, for example, leucine by valine or isoleucine, aspartic acid by glutamic acid, glutamine by asparagine, asparagine by lysine etc., it being understood that the reverse substitutions are permitted in the same conditions. In some cases, it may also be possible to replace of a residue in the L-form by a residue in the D-form or the replacement of the glutamine (Q) residue by a pyro-glutamic acid compound.

Preferably, said peptide consists of a sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO: 1 to SEQ ID NO: 26.

Most preferably, said peptide is selected from the group consisting of:

- a linear peptide presenting SEQ ID NO: 1 (DSPLVPFIDFHP) denominated hereafter p21, and

- a cyclic peptide in which the side chain of the cysteine residue at position 1 of SEQ ID NO: 18 (CSSVTAWTTGCG) or SEQ ID NO: 22 (CSKLASMETGCG) is attached covalently to the side chain residue of the cysteine at position 11 of SEQ ID NO: 18 or SEQ ID NO: 22 via a disulfide bond; said peptides are denominated hereafter, respectively p65 and p66.

According to an other advantageous embodiment of the invention, said peptide is associated with another peptide or non-peptide molecule and/or incorporated into a suitable support including for example, polymers, lipidic vesicles, microspheres, proteins and the like.

Such association which may improve the peptide solubility, absor-

tion, bioavailability, biological half life, is formed, by using techniques well known in the art; it may be through, without limitation, covalent bonding (*e.g.*, amide bond, disulfide bond...), or through chelation, electrostatic interactions, hydrophobic interactions, hydrogen bonding, ion-dipole interactions, dipole-dipole interactions, or any combination of the above.

According to a preferred embodiment of the invention, said peptide is incorporated in a complex comprising a plurality of identical or different peptides according to the invention, linked by covalent or non-covalent bonds.

According to another preferred embodiment of the invention, said peptide is associated with a marker such as a fluorescent marker, to facilitate the detection of the peptides according to the invention.

According to another preferred embodiment of the invention, said peptide is included in a fusion protein to allow expression of said peptide.

The peptide of the present invention may be prepared by any suitable process. Preferably, it is obtained by chemical synthesis in liquid or solid phase by successive couplings of the different amino acid residues to be incorporated (from the N-terminal end to the C-terminal end in liquid phase, or from the C-terminal end to the N-terminal end in solid phase) wherein the N-terminal ends and the reactive side chains are previously blocked by conventional groups. For solid phase synthesis the technique described by Merrifield (*J. Am. Chem. Soc.*, 1964, 85, 2149-2154) may be used.

The peptide of the present invention may also be obtained by genetic engineering technology. A typical example comprise culturing a host cell containing an expression vector comprising a nucleic acid sequence encoding said peptide, under conditions suitable for the expression of the peptide, and recovering the peptide from the host cell culture. The peptide may be included in a fusion protein by cloning a cDNA into an expression vector in frame with a polynucleotide coding for the peptide of the invention. Alternatively, multimer of identical or different peptides can also be produced by expressing a polynucleotide coding for multiple copies of a monomer, or coding for different monomers.

The invention also provides a polynucleotide encoding the peptide

according to the invention, as well as the complement of said polynucleotide, and fragments of at least 5 nucleotides thereof.

In particular, the invention provides the nucleotide sequences encoding the peptides SEQ ID NO: 1 to SEQ ID NO: 26, including all possible
5 examples of nucleotide sequences encoding these peptides which result from the degeneration of the genetic code.

Nucleic acids of the invention may be obtained by the well-known methods of recombinant DNA-technology and/or chemical DNA synthesis.

The invention also provides recombinant vectors comprising a
10 polynucleotide encoding the peptide of the invention. Vectors of the invention are preferably expression vectors, wherein a sequence encoding a peptide of the invention is placed under control of appropriate transcriptional and translational control elements. These vectors may be obtained and introduced in a host cell by the well-known recombinant DNA and genetic engineering techniques.

15 The invention also comprises a prokaryotic or eukaryotic host cell transformed by a vector of the invention, preferably an expression vector.

The invention further concerns a pharmaceutical composition comprising an effective amount of the peptide of the invention, optionally in a combination with a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

20 The optional carriers of the pharmaceutical compositions of the invention can be any vehicle for parenteral, oral, aerosol, nasal or ocular administration of drugs acting on the nervous system. For example, a composition according to the invention is administered through the nose, which enables the penetration of the aerosol composition to the Central Nervous System through the olfactory nerve or via
25 the ocular route or by any other suitable method of administration as described in *W.M. Pardridge, Peptide drug Delivery, Raven Press, N.Y., 1991*.

30 The invention further concerns the use of a peptide of the invention for the preparation of a medicament for the prevention and/or the treatment of a pathological condition selected from the group consisting of: neurodegenerative diseases, brain and spine lesions, age-related learning and memory problems and cancer.

The amount of peptide in the composition is in a concentration ranges from about 0.1 μM to about 10 μM . The preferred frequency of administration and effective dosage will vary from one subject to another.

The peptides according to the invention have the following advantages:

- they are active *in vivo* at low doses (0.5 μM concentration),
- they are stable *in vivo*,
- they are very efficient *in vivo* since they act extracellularly; thus, their activity is not limited by their ability to penetrate inside the cell,
- they are not toxic, and
- they can be produced easily in large quantities.

The present invention will be further illustrated by the additional description and drawings which follow, which refer to examples illustrating the isolation, the binding specificity and the biological effects of the PSA mimetic peptides according to the invention. It should be understood however that these examples are given only by way of illustration of the invention and do not constitute in anyway a limitation thereof.

- Figure 1 illustrates PSA-NCAM structure.
- Figure 2 illustrates the effect of PSA mimetic peptides p65 and p66, on neurite outgrowth *in vitro*: mouse dorsal root ganglion explants (E13,5) were cultured in absence (A, D) or presence of the p65 and p66 peptides coated on the microplates as BSA conjugate (B,E) or under soluble form (C,F). (G) quantification of the effect of the mimetic peptides on the mean length of the longest neurite. *** P<0,001 compared with control with Student's t test. (H) cumulative frequency distribution plot of the mean length of the longest neurite.

- Figure 3 illustrates the effect of PSA mimetic peptide p65 on fasciculation and guidance *in vivo*: E9 chick whole retina mounted preparation (A) and its schematic drawing demonstrating the position of the DiI crystal (B). The dashed rectangle indicates the area from which photographs were taken. Arrows point toward the optic fissure. Axons of E9 chick retina injected at E3 with the reverse peptide (C,F) or the p65 peptide (D,G,E,H). Arrowheads show examples of axons that

leave their fascicle and run perpendicularly to it.

- Figures 4 to 7 illustrate the effect of PSA mimetic peptides on cell migration *in vitro*, analysed on subventricular zone explants (P1) from normal mice (NCAM +/+) , heterozygous mice (NCAM +/-) or knock-out mice (NCAM -/-),
5 cultured in presence of the mimetic peptides (p65, p21, p66), different form of said peptides (cyclic, linear, linear and acetylated), the control peptides (reverse p65 and reverse p66 and p22) or endosialidase N:
 - figure 4 illustrates the effect of the reverse p65 peptide (A,D), endosialidase N (B,E) or the mimetic peptides p65 and p66 (C,F) . (G) quantification of the effect of the
10 mimetic peptides on the cell migration mean distance. *** P< 0,001 compared with control with student's t test. (H) cumulative frequency distribution plot of the mean distance of migration. (I) Dose-dependant effect of the p65 peptide on the mean distance of cell migration,
 - figure 5 illustrates the effect of different forms of p65 mimetic peptide (cyclic, linear,
15 linear and acetylated) on the cell migration mean distance, compared with reverse p65 control peptide. *** P< 0,001 compared with control with student's t test,
 - figure 6 illustrates the effect of p65 mimetic peptide on the cell migration mean distance in knock-out mice (NCAM -/-) or heterozygous mice (NCAM +/-). Endo N treated cells from NCAM +/- mice and reverse p65 treated cells are included for
20 comparison. *** P< 0,001 compared with control with student's t test, and
 - figure 7 illustrates the effect of p65 and p21 mimetic peptides on the cell migration mean distance. Endo N treated cells and cells treated with control peptides (reverse p65 and p22) are included for comparison. *** P< 0,001 compared with control with student's t test.
- 25 - Figure 8 illustrates the effect of PSA mimetic peptide p65 on cell migration *in vivo*: (A) schematic drawing of the transplantation. (B) Confocal microscopy photography of a section showing the RMS (Rostral Migration Stream) of grafted mice in presence of p65 peptide. Arrowheads show examples of GFP and PSA positive cells. SVZ explants (P1) were grafted in presence of the reverse peptide (C,D)
30 or the p65 peptide (E,F) and brains were analysed three days after graft (C,E) or four day after graft (D,F). (G) quantification of the effct of the p65 peptide on the number

of GFP positive cells that reach the olfactory bulb three days after graft. * P< 0,05 compared with control with Student's t test.

EXAMPLE 1 : PEPTIDE LIBRARY SCREENING WITH ANTI-PSA MONOCLOINAL ANTIBODY

5 **1) Materials and Methods**

1.1) Materials

- Peptide 12-mer Phage Display Library

Two libraries were screened. The first library (12TM Phage Display peptide Library, NEW ENGLAND BIOLABS) comprises 12-mer linear peptides presented on the surface of M13-like phage particles as fusion protein to the N-terminus of the pIII minor coat-protein (5 copies/phage particle). The variance of the library differs from 10⁸ to 10⁹ peptides with constant sequence length.

The second library, prepared as described in Felici et al. (J. Mol. Biol., 1991, 222, 301-301), comprises 12-mer cyclic peptides including 2 cysteine residues at position 1 and 11 linked by a disulfide bond, presented on the surface of M13-like phage particles as fusion protein to the N-terminus of the pVIII major coat-protein (100 copies/phage). The library comprises approximately 10⁸ peptides with constant sequence length.

- Anti-PSA monoclonal antibody (mAb)

20 Anti-PSA monoclonal antibodies, prepared by standard techniques as described in *Antibodies : A Laboratory Manual*, E. Howell and D Lane, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, 1988, are used. For example, monoclonal antibodies 735 (Frosch et al., P.N.A.S;1985, 82, 1194-1198), 30H12 (Coquillat et al., Infect. Immun., 2001, 69, 7130-7139) or MenB (ABCYS AbC0019) may be used.

25 - plates (MaxisorpTM NUNC)

- tubes (MaxisorpTM, NUNC)

- *E. coli* strain ER2537 (NEW ENGLAND BIOLABS)

- 96 gIII sequencing primer (NEW ENGLAND BIOLABS):

5'-CCCTCATAGTTAGCGTAACG-3' (SEQ ID NO: 27)

30 1.2) Buffers

- Blocking solution : 0.5 % BSA in PBS

- Coating solution : 25 µg/ml anti-PSA mAb in PBS
- TBS : 50 mM Tris-HCl pH 8.6, 150 mM NaCl.
- TBST : TBS containing 0.1 % or 0.5 % Tween 20.
- PEG /NaCl : 20 % (W/V) polyethylene glycol-8000, 2.5 M NaCl.
- 5 - Iodide Buffer : 10mM Tris-HCl, pH 8.0, 1 mM EDTA, 4M NaCl.

1.3) Method

MaxisorpTM tubes were incubated overnight with 2 ml of coating solution, at + 4°C, with gentle agitation, according to the manual of the Ph.D. 12TM Phage Display peptide Library kit (NEW ENGLAND BIOLABS). The coating solution was removed and used for the coating of new tubes for new rounds of biopanning. The coated tubes were incubated with 2 ml of blocking solution for 1 h and washed 6 times with TBST. The tubes were filled with 2 ml of phage solution ($7.5 \cdot 10^{10}$ pfu/ml in TBST containing 0.1 % Tween 20) and incubated with gentle agitation at room temperature for 1 h. After removal of the phage solution, the tubes were washed 10 times with TBST. Bound phages were either eluted, specifically with 1 mM colominic acid in TBS for 1 h, or non-specifically with 0.2 M glycine HCl (pH 2.2) for 10 min with immediate neutralization with 1 M Tris-HCl. Eluates were amplified in 20 ml of *E. coli* ER2537 culture (starting OD₆₀₀ : 0.03), for 4.5 h at 37 °C with vigorous shaking. The cultures were centrifuged for 10 min at 10,000 rpm at 4 °C. The supernatant was transferred to a fresh tube and centrifuged for another 10 minutes. PEG/NaCl solution was added to the supernatant (1 volume PEG/NaCl for 6 volumes supernatant) and phage was precipitated overnight at 4 °C. The solution containing the precipitate was centrifuged for 15 min at 10,000 rpm at 4 °C. The supernatant was decanted and the pellet was suspended in 1 ml TBS and re-precipitated with 1/6 volume of PEG/NaCl for 1 h on ice. After centrifugation, the pellet was finally suspended in 200 ml TBS, 0.02 % NaN₃.

This amplified eluate was dissolved in TBST and a second and a third round of biopanning were carried out as described above; for the second round, the TBST used for washing and phage incubation contained 0.1 % Tween 20; in the 30 third round the content was 0.5 %.

The non-amplified eluate from the third round was subsequently

tittered on LB/IPTG/X-gal plates. Blue plaques were picked and the phage clone amplified in 2 ml *E. coli* ER2537 culture for 4.5 h at 37 °C, with vigorous shaking. After centrifugation for 10 min at 10,000 rpm, at 4 °C, the supernatant was mixed with 1/6 volume PEG/NaCl and the phage precipitated at 4 °C overnight. The precipitate was centrifuged for 15 min at 10,000 rpm at 4 °C. The pellet was suspended in 100 µl TBS. 10 µl from this solution were mixed with 100 µl iodide buffer and 250 µl ethanol for the precipitation of the single-stranded phage DNA. After incubation for 10 min at room temperature, the solution was centrifuged for 10 min at 15,000 rpm. The supernatant was discarded and the pellet washed in 70 % ethanol and dried briefly under vacuum. The pellet was suspended in 10 µl distilled water containing the sequencing primer for automated sequencing. The remaining single phage solution was used for ELISA experiments.

2) Results .

After three rounds of biopanning, phages presenting the following sequences were isolated (Table I, II, III and IV).

**Table I : Linear peptides sequences isolated from
17 different phages eluted with in 1 mM colominic acid**

SEQ ID NO:	sequence
5	SWLQMPWALVRT
5	SWLQMPWALVRT
4	TRLAPLVFPLDY
6	EIHLRMIKQITI
7	WHLEYMWWRWPRL
5	SWLQMPWALVRT
5	SWLQMPWALVRT
8	LIEQRRLPKHILT
9	YETSSSRLLAYA
5	SWLQMPWALVRT
10	TLASQLSNTSAY
5	SWLQMPWALVRT
11	SDQGVNGWSNP
4	TRLAPLVFPLDY
5	TRLAPLVFPLDY
5	SWLQMPWALVRT
4	TRLAPLVFPLDY

Table II : Linear peptides sequences isolated from 20 different phages eluted with 0.2 M glycine.

SEQ ID NO:	Sequence
1	DSPLVPFIDFHP
2	LWQPPLIPGIDF
2	LWQPPLIPGIDF
12	WHWNWLWAPASPT
3	QIEPWFTPEDFP
1	DSPLVPFIDFHP
3	QIEPWFTPEDFP
13	WHWQWTPWSIQP
2	LWQPPLIPGIDF
5	SWLQMPWALVRT
2	LWQPPLIPGIDF
1	DSPLVPFIDFHP
15	SHLDLSTGHRTS
1	DSPLVPFIDFHP
1	DSPLVPFIDFHP
5	SWLQMPWALVRT
1	DSPLVPFIDFHP
14	IKSPLTWLVPPD
1	DSPLVPFIDFHP
1	DSPLVPFIDFHP

5 linear peptides have a high occurrence in the phages isolated after three rounds of biopanning (Table III).

5

Table III: Alignment of the 5 more frequent linear sequences

Frequency	SEQ ID NO:	Sequence													
9/40	5	S	W	L	Q	M	P	W	A	L	V	R	T		
8/40	1	D	S	P	L	V	P	F	I	D	F	H	P		
4/40	4	T	R	L	A	P	L	V	F	P	L	D	Y		
4/40	2	L	W	Q	P	P	L	I	I	G	I	D	F		
2/40	3	Q	I	E	P	W	F	T	P	E	D	F	P		

An alignment at GeneStream Align Home page to sequence SEQ ID NO: 1, showed that the sequence similarity varies from 42.9 % for SEQ ID NO: 2, 30.8 % for SEQ ID NO: 3, 28.6 % for SEQ ID NO: 4, to 8.3 % for SEQ ID NO: 5.

10

13 cyclic peptides have a high occurrence in the phages isolated after three rounds of biopanning (Table IV).

Table IV: Cyclic peptides sequences isolated from phages

SEQ ID NO:	Sequence
16	CYPLNPEVYHCG
17	CWPLSHSVTVCG
17	CWPLSHSVIVCG
18	CSSVTAWTTGCG
19	CYMASGVFLCG
17	CWPLSHSVIVCG
20	CWPLGPSTYICG
21	CSLIASMETGCG
22	CSKIASMETGCG
16	CYPLNPEVYHCG
23	CYIGDPPFNPCG
24	CWPLGDSTVICG
25	CPLRLAFTFGCG
26	CTRMSHGYWICG

EXAMPLE 2 : ANALYSIS OF PEPTIDES SPECIFICITY BY COMPETITIVE PHAGE ELISA

5 **1) Materials and Methods**

1.1) Materials

- anti-PSA monoclonal antibody 735 or 30H12
- MaxiSorp™ plates (NUNC) for antibody coating : ELISA plates
- microtiter plates (NUNC) for phage dilution : dilution plates

10 - M13 bacteriophages presenting peptides of Tables III and IV from example 1

- HRP conjugated anti-M13 antibody (PHARMACIA 27-9411-01)
- ABTS [2,2'Azino-bis(3-ethylbenzothiazoline-6-sulfonic acid), SIGMA]
- Colominic acid (SIGMA)
- Dextran (SIGMA)

15 **1.2) Buffers**

- PBS pH 7.4

- Blocking solution : 0.5 % BSA in PBS

- TBS

- TBST : TBS containing 0.05 % Tween 20

- Horse Radish Peroxydase-conjugated anti-M13 antibody solution : 1/5000 in TBST

5 - Horse Radish Peroxydase (HRP) substrate solution : 22 mg ABTS in 100 µl 50 mM sodium citrate pH 4.0. Prior enzymatic reaction, add 36 ml 30 % H₂O₂ to 21 ml ABTS solution.

- competitor solution : 1 mM colominic acid in TBST

- control solution : 1 mM dextran in TBST

10 1.3) Method

MaxiSorp™ plate wells were coated with 100 µl mAb solution (25 µg/ml) for 2 h at room temperature. The control wells were coated only with the blocking solution. In parallel, the phage dilution plates were blocked with 200 µl blocking solution for 2 h. The antibody coated wells and the control wells of the

15 ELISA plates were blocked with 200 µl blocking solution for 1 h. In parallel the phage dilution plates were washed 6 times with TBST and 120 µl TBST was added to the wells. An appropriate volume of a phage solution was added to the first well and the volume was adjusted to 140 µl with TBST. The phage solution in well one was diluted in the ratio 1/7 by taking 20 µl out of the first well and transferring into the second,

20 also to achieving the total volume of 140 µl. This was repeated for the remaining wells. The phage dilutions for the control wells were done the same way. The blocked ELISA plate was washed 6 times with TBST and the phage dilutions or the competitor solution were added. After incubation for 1 h, the plates were washed 10 times with TBST. After incubation for 1 h, the wells were washed 10 times with

25 TBST. 100 µl of the HRP-conjugated M13 antibody solution was added to the wells.

After incubation for 1 h, the wells were washed 10 times with TBST and 100 µl of the HRP substrate solution (with H₂O₂) was added to the wells. The plates were read at 405 nm using a microplate reader.

30 2)-Results

The binding specificity of peptides SEQ ID NO: 1 to 5 from example

I was tested in a competitive ELISA using colominic acid as competitor. The results presented in Tables V to IX are expressed as percentage of binding, by comparison with phage presenting SEQ ID NO: 5 at a concentration of 710 ng/well (100 %).

Tableau V : Binding of phage presenting SEQ ID NO: 5 to mAb 735

	Phage concentration (ng/well)						
	710	109	18	3	1	0	0
phage	100 ± 3	102 ± 0	98 ± 0	73 ± 4	18 ± 2	4 ± 3	2 ± 1
phage + colominic acid	106 ± 0	103 ± 5	90 ± 0	36 ± 0	5 ± 0	1 ± 0	1 ± 0
phage + dextran	102 ± 2	103 ± 1	97 ± 1	62 ± 1	14 ± 0	5 ± 0	1 ± 0
phage + BSA	5 ± 1	3 ± 1	1 ± 0	1 ± 0	0 ± 0	0 ± 0	0 ± 0

5

Tableau VI : Binding of phage presenting SEQ ID NO: 1 to mAb 735

	Phage concentration (ng/well)						
	1003	154	26	4	1	0	0
phage + mAb735	108 ± 2	111 ± 7	111 ± 3	112 ± 12	86 ± 15	28 ± 2	7 ± 0
phage + colominic acid + mAb735	108 ± 0	109 ± 12	90 ± 3	42 ± 3	12 ± 1	2 ± 1	0 ± 0
phage + dextran + mAb735	109 ± 6	110 ± 6	112 ± 5	107 ± 1	77 ± 4	24 ± 4	8 ± 0
phage + BSA	10 ± 1	4 ± 1	3 ± 0	1 ± 1	0 ± 0	0 ± 0	0 ± 0

Tableau VII : Binding of phage presenting SEQ ID NO: 4 to mAb 735

	Phage concentration (ng/well)						
	870	134	22	4	1	0	0
phage + mAb735	107 ± 7	112 ± 10	109 ± 1	108 ± 2	67 ± 2	17 ± 0	4 ± 0
phage + colominic acid + mAb735	96 ± 7	106 ± 3	89 ± 1	29 ± 1	5 ± 0	1 ± 0	0 ± 0
phage + dextran + mAb735	96 ± 12	108 ± 7	113 ± 0	105 ± 0	66 ± 3	16 ± 1	5 ± 0
phage + BSA	10 ± 1	4 ± 1	1 ± 1	0 ± 0	0 ± 0	0 ± 0	0 ± 0

10

Tableau VIII : Binding of phage presenting SEQ ID NO: 2 to mAb 735

	Phage concentration (ng/well)						
	796	122	20	3	1	0	0
phage + mAb735	108 ± 5	109 ± 3	112 ± 10	89 ± 11	27 ± 4	4 ± 2	2 ± 1
phage + colominic acid + mAb735	109 ± 6	114 ± 12	100 ± 6	48 ± 6	10 ± 1	1 ± 0	1 ± 0
phage + dextran + mAb735	109 ± 8	111 ± 6	110 ± 5	99 ± 1	27 ± 1	5 ± 1	1 ± 0
phage + BSA	12 ± 1	9 ± 1	4 ± 3	2 ± 1	1 ± 0	0 ± 0	0 ± 0

Tableau IX : Binding of phage presenting SEQ ID NO: 3 to mAb 735

	Phage concentration (ng/well)						
	859	132	22	4	1	0	0
phage + mAb735	111 ± 8	109 ± 16	114 ± 8	99 ± 10	50 ± 1	13 ± 1	6 ± 0
phage + colominic acid + mAb735	104 ± 2	107 ± 2	85 ± 7	27 ± 3	4 ± 1	1 ± 1	0 ± 0
phage + dextran + mAb735	109 ± 2	108 ± 0	108 ± 3	107 ± 8	57 ± 3	13 ± 1	6 ± 0
phage + BSA	10 ± 0	5 ± 1	2 ± 1	1 ± 0	0 ± 0	0 ± 0	0 ± 0

The phage presenting sequence SEQ ID NO: 1 (DSPLVPFIDFHP) showed the best binding to mAb 735 in comparison with the other phages. This
5 binding was competed with colominic acid, whereas dextran showed no competition effects. The phage presenting sequence SEQ ID NO: 4 showed similar values. Because of the low occurrence of sequence SEQ ID NO: 4 it was decided to synthesize sequence SEQ ID NO: 1 (peptide p21) and a randomized variant of sequence SEQ ID NO: 1 (peptide p22: PDHIFVFSPDLP, SEQ ID NO: 28) as control.

10 The phages presenting cyclic peptides corresponding to sequence CSSVTAWTTGCG (SEQ ID NO: 18) and CSKIASMETGCG (SEQ ID NO: 22) respectively , in which the two cysteine residues are linked via a disulfide-bridge, showed the best binding to mAb 30H12 in comparison with the other phages. Thus, it was decided to synthesize the corresponding cyclic peptides (p65 and p66).

15 **EXAMPLE 3 : ANALYSIS OF p21, p65 and p66 SPECIFICITY BY COMPETITIVE PEPTIDE ELISA**

1) Preparation of biotinylated peptide-BSA conjugates

1.1) Materials

- m-maleimidobenzoyl-N-hydroxysuccimide ester (MBS, SIGMA M2786, PIERCE

20 22311)

- biotinamidocaproate-N-hydroxysuccimide ester (NHS-Biotin, SIGMA 02643, PIERCE 20217)

- dimethylformamide (DMF, SIGMA)

- BSA (CALBIOCHEM 122605)

25 - cysteine-containing synthetic peptides deriving from p21 (DSPLVPFIDFHP, SEQ ID NO: 29), p65 and p66 and corresponding cysteine-containing control peptides deriving from p22 (PDHIFVFSPDLP, SEQ ID NO: 30), p65 and p66 reverse

peptides, respectively.

- PD-10 size exclusion column (AMERSHAM-PHARMACIA 17-0851-01)
- Ultrafree-4-centrifuge filters & tub Biomax 50K NMWL membrane, 4 ml volume (MILLIPORE UFV4BQK25)

5 - L-cysteine (SIGMA)

1.2) Buffers

- MBS stock solution : 13 mg/ml in DMF

- NIIS-Biotin stock solution : 2.5 mg/ml in DMF (These concentrations lead to highly activated BSA molecules with approximately 5 molecules biotin/BSA molecule)

10 - conjugation buffer : 0.083 M NaH₂PO₄, 0.9 M NaCl , pH 7.2.

- PBS pH 7.4

- cysteine solution : L-cysteine 100 mg/ml in conjugation buffer

1.3) Method

15 10 mg BSA were dissolved in 2 ml conjugation buffer and 140 µl of the MBS/NHS-Biotin stock solution were added. The solution was incubated for 1 h at room temperature, with gentle agitation. The PD-10 column was equilibrated with 50 ml conjugation buffer. After adding 2.14 ml of the solution onto the column, the activated BSA was eluted with 0.5 ml aliquots of conjugation buffer. The protein elution was monitored at 280 nm. An appropriate amount of the cysteine containing peptide 20 was dissolved in 1 ml conjugation buffer. For a 5 mer (MW 1500 , 1.14 mg peptide was added to 10 mg BSA). This peptide solution was added to the pooled fractions containing maleimide-activated /biotinylated BSA. After 2 h incubation at room temperature, 100 ml cysteine solution was added to block the non-reacted maleimide groups. After 1 h, the reaction solution was dialysed 5 times with 1 ml PBS, in an 25 ultrafiltration unit. The biotinylated conjugate was dissolved in PBS and aliquots stored at - 20 °C.

2) Competitive ELISA of biotinylated peptide-BSA conjugates on anti-PSA mAb

2.1) Materials, buffers and method

30 2.1.1) Materials

- mAb 735 and 30H12

- MaxiSorpTM plates (NUNC) for coating the antibody: ELISA plates
- microtiter plates (NUNC) for peptide dilution: dilution plates
- Biotinylated peptide-BSA conjugates prepared as above described
- Extravidin alkaline phosphatase-avidin conjugate (SIGMA E2636)

5 - p-nitrophenyl-phosphatase alkaline substrate (SIGMA 104-105)

2.1.2) Buffers

- PBS pH 7.4

- Blocking solution : 0.5 % BSA in PBS

- TBS

10 - TBST: TBS containing 0.05 % Tween 20

- Extravidin alkaline phosphatase-avidin conjugate solution : 1 /5000 in TBST

- Alkaline phosphatase substrate solution ; 1 tablet in 5 ml 50 mM NaHCO₃, 1 mM MgCl₂ solution, pH 9.6.

- mixed competitor solution : 1 mM colominic acid with a peptide-BSA conjugate

15 gradient in TBST

2.1.3) Method

MaxisorpTM plate wells were coated with 100 µl mAb solution (25 µg/ml) for 2 h at room temperature. The control wells of the ELISA plates were only coated with the blocking solution. In parallel, the peptide-BSA conjugate dilution plates were blocked with 200 µl blocking solution for 2 h. The antibody coated wells and the control wells were blocked with 200 µl blocking solution for 1 h. In parallel the peptide-BSA conjugate dilution plates were washed 6 times with TBST and 120 µl TBST was added to the wells. An appropriate volume of peptide-BSA conjugate solution was added to the first well and the volume adjusted to 140 µl with TBST. The peptide-BSA conjugate in well one was diluted in the ratio 1/7 by taking 20 µl out of the first well and transferring into the second also to achieve the total volume of 140 µl. This was repeated for the remaining wells. The peptide-BSA conjugate dilutions for the control wells were done the same way. The blocked ELISA plates were washed 6 times with TBST and the peptide-BSA conjugate dilutions or 100 µl of the mixed competitor solution was added to the wells. After incubation for 1 h, the wells were washed 10 times with TBST and 100 µl of the alkaline phosphatase substrate solution

was added to the wells. The plates were read out after 10 to 60 min using a microplate reader at 405 nm.

2.2) Results

The specificity of peptide p21 (SEQ ID NO: 1) was investigated in a competition ELISA using biotinylated p21-BSA conjugate and a randomized variant of p21 (p22) conjugate as a control. The results presented in Tables X and XI are expressed as percentage of binding by comparison with peptide p21 at the highest concentration ($9.45 \cdot 10^{-5}$ M) which corresponds to 100 % binding.

Table X : Binding of p21 to mAb 735 in competitive ELISA

	Peptide concentration (M)								
	$9.45 \cdot 10^{-5}$	$1.67 \cdot 10^{-5}$	$2.94 \cdot 10^{-6}$	$5.20 \cdot 10^{-7}$	$9.27 \cdot 10^{-8}$	$1.62 \cdot 10^{-9}$	$2.86 \cdot 10^{-9}$	$5.04 \cdot 10^{-10}$	$8.89 \cdot 10^{-11}$
Peptide + mAb 735	100 ± 11	93 ± 10	95 ± 1	91 ± 2	93 ± 9	56 ± 4	13 ± 1	2 ± 0	0 ± 0
Peptide + colominic acid + mAb 735	43 ± 3	34 ± 3	23 ± 1	15 ± 3	5 ± 2	0 ± 1	0 ± 0	0 ± 0	0 ± 0
Peptide + chondroitin sulfate C + mAb 735	96 ± 8	99 ± 4	99 ± 8	94 ± 7	92 ± 2	50 ± 1	11 ± 2	3 ± 0	2 ± 0
Peptide + BSA	3 ± 1	1 ± 0	0 ± 0	0 ± 0	0 ± 0	0 ± 0	0 ± 0	0 ± 0	0 ± 0

10

Table XI : Binding of p22 to mAb 735 in competitive ELISA

	Peptide concentration (M)								
	$9.45 \cdot 10^{-5}$	$1.67 \cdot 10^{-5}$	$2.94 \cdot 10^{-6}$	$5.20 \cdot 10^{-7}$	$9.27 \cdot 10^{-8}$	$1.62 \cdot 10^{-9}$	$2.86 \cdot 10^{-9}$	$5.04 \cdot 10^{-10}$	$8.89 \cdot 10^{-11}$
Peptide + mAb 735	32 ± 1	3 ± 0	1 ± 0	0 ± 0	0 ± 0	0 ± 0	0 ± 0	0 ± 0	0 ± 0
Peptide + colominic acid + mAb 735	27 ± 0	5 ± 0	0 ± 0	0 ± 0	0 ± 0	0 ± 0	0 ± 0	0 ± 0	0 ± 0
Peptide + chondroitin sulfate C + mAb 735	29 ± 0	8 ± 1	3 ± 1	2 ± 0	2 ± 1	2 ± 0	2 ± 0	2 ± 0	2 ± 0
Peptide + BSA	3 ± 1	1 ± 1	0 ± 0	0 ± 0	0 ± 0	0 ± 0	0 ± 0	0 ± 0	0 ± 0

Table X shows a clear inhibition of p21 binding in the presence of colominic acid. By comparison, chondroitin sulfate C had no influence on the binding of peptide B. Table XI shows no binding to mAb 735 for the randomized variant of p21 conjugate (p22); no differences were observed when colominic acid or chondroitin sulfate C were present. These results lead to the conclusion that sequence SEQ ID NO: 1 (peptide p21) binds specifically to mAb 735 in a concentration-dependent manner.

EXAMPLE 8 : ANALYSIS OF PSA MIMETIC PEPTIDES BIOACTIVITY**1) Materials and methods****1.1) Animals**

GFP transgenic mice have been previously described in
5 Hadjantonakis et al. (Biotechnol., 2002, 2, 11-), and all analysis was performed on Swiss background. NCAM knock out mice (NCAM -/-) have been previously described in Cremer et al., precited.

1.2) Dorsal Root ganglions (DRG) explant culture

E13,5 DRGs were dissected out from mice embryos in HBSS
10 medium and seeded on glass coverslips coated with polylysine or with peptides linked to BSA. Explants were cultured in the presence or the absence of the peptides under soluble form (40 µM) in two ml of neurobasal medium (DMEM/Ham's F12, 3 : 1 (V/V), GIBCO, buffered with 20mM Hepes), supplemented as described in Faivre-Sarrailh et al., J.Cell. Sci., 1999, 118, 3015-3027 and Chazal et al., J.Neurosci., 2000,
15 20, 1446-1457.

1.3) Subventricular zone (SVZ) explant culture.

Cultures of SVZ explants were performed as described in Chazal et al., precited. Briefly, 1-day-old mice were killed by rapid decapitation. Brains were dissected out and sectionned by Vibratome (Leica). The SVZ from the lateral wall of
20 the anterior lateral ventricle horn was dissected out in HBSS medium (LIFE TECHNOLOGIES) and cut into 200-300 µm diameter explants. The explants were mixed with Matrigel (BECKTON DICKINSON) and cultured in four-well dishes. After polymerisation, the gel was overlaid with 400 µl of serum-free medium containing B-27 supplement (LIFE TECHNOLOGIES), in the presence or the absence
25 of 40 µM of peptides (p65, p66, reverse p65, p21 or p22) and 70 U of Endo N per explanter.

1.4) Immunohistochemistry

Fixed DRGs (*Dorsal Root ganglia*) explants and sections were incubated at 4°C respectively 2 hr with an anti-neurofilament (SMI-31, dilution
30 1:800, STERNBERGER MONOCLONALS) and overnight with an anti-PSA antibody (dilution 1:200, Rougon et al, J. Cell. Biol., 1986, 103, 2429-2437). Revelation was

performed by 1 hr incubation with the corresponding fluorescent-labeled secondary antibody (Goat anti-mouse IgM or IgG conjugated with Texas red, IMMUNOTECH)

1.5) Cell migration distance (SVZ explants) and neuronal outgrowth (DRG explants).

After 48 h in culture, explants were examining directly (SVZ) or after overnight fixation with a 4% paraformaldehyde solution in PBS and immunostaining (DRGs). Observation was done using 2,5X, 5X, 10X and 32X objectives (Axiovert 35M, ZEISS). Images were collected with a video camera (Cool View, PHOTONIC SCIENCE) and analysed using image-processing software (Visiolab1000, BIOCOP). Mean migration distance (calculated on five different experiments, including at least five explants per condition) or mean length of the longest neurite (calculated on two different experiments, including at least eight explants per condition), was the distance in micrometers between the explant edge and the border of the cell migration front. Four measurements were performed for each explant. The significance of the differences between the control and the different experimental conditions was calculated by Student's t test.

1.6) Transplantation

100 µm diameter explants of 1-day-old GFP mice SVZ were incubated fifteen minutes in DMEM supplemented with 10% fetal bovine serum in presence of 0.01 M of p65 or reverse peptide and stereotactically grafted (0,5 µl) into six weeks old mice SVZ as described in Lois and Alvarez-Buylla (Science, 1994, 264, 1145-1148). Three or four days after the graft, animals were perfused intracardiacally with a 4% paraformaldehyde solution in PBS. Brains were dissected out, postfixed, cryoprotected, and freezed in isopentane. Sagittal serial sections (12 µm) were cut with a Leica microtome and immunostained as described above. GFP cells arriving in the olfactory bulb after three days were observed using UV fluorescence with a 40X objective (Axioscope, ZEISS) and counted on two different experiments (four animals per condition). The significance of the difference between the two conditions was calculated by Student's t test.

30 1.7) Intravitreal injections and retinal whole mount.

Injections were performed as described in Monnier et al. (Develop-

mental Biology, 2001, 229, 1-14). Briefly, a 2 X 2 cm window was cut into the shell over E3 chick embryos. One μ l of Fast green with 10 mM of p65 or reverse peptide was injected into the right eye vitreous body using a capillary. After a five-days incubation at 37°C, (E8) retinae were dissected, spread onto nitrocellulose filters 5 (MILLIPORE), and fixed with 4% paraformaldehyde solution in PBS. Two small DiI (1,1'-dioctadecyl-3,3,3',3'-tetramethylindocarbocyanine perchlorate) crystals were applied dorsally to the optic fissure. Retinac were stored in the dark at 37°C for 10 days until the dye reached the axonal growth cones in the fissure, mounted in glycerol :PBS (9 :1, v :v) and analysed using confocal microscopy.

10 2) Results

2.1) Effect of PSA mimetic peptides on axonal growth and fasciculation *in vitro* (figure 2)

15 Mouse dorsal root ganglion explants (E13,5) were cultured in the presence of p65 and p66 cyclic mimetic peptides, either in soluble form or coated on the microplates as BSA conjugates. Cells cultured in the absence of peptides or in the presence of reverse peptides (coated or in soluble form) were used as controls.

The effect of the peptides on neurite outgrowth and fasciculation was analysed qualitatively and quantitatively (figure 2 A to H).

20 p65 and p66, in a soluble form, induce a clear defasciculation of axon bundles (C versus A and F versus D) and a significant increase in axonal growth (C versus A) by comparison with the controls.

Interestingly, p65 and p66, in a coated form, induced an opposite effect on fasciculation (B versus A and E versus D) and no effect on neurite outgrowth.

25 These results were confirmed by quantitative analysis showing that p65 and p66, in soluble form, increased neurite outgrowth by 34 % and 21 % respectively, compared to the controls, whereas the same peptides in the coated form induce no significant increase on neurite outgrowth (figure 2G and 2H).

30 These results demonstrate that PSA mimetic peptides are able to modulate axonal growth and fasciculation *in vitro*.

2.2) Effect of PSA mimetic peptides on axonal fasciculation and guidance *in vivo* (figure 3)

p65 and p66 were injected into chicken embryo eyes (E3) and the retina were observed at E9. The results presented in figure 3 show that the presence of 5 PSA mimetic peptides during retina development induce axons guidance and fasciculation defects ; axons leave their fascicle and run perpendicularly to it (arrowheads in D, G, E and H). By comparison, no defect in axon guidance and fasciculation is observed after injection of the control peptides.

These results demonstrate that PSA mimetic peptides are able to 10 modulate axonal growth and guidance *in vivo*.

2.3) Effect of PSA mimetic peptides on cell migration *in vitro* (figures 4 to 7)

The effect of PSA mimetic peptides on cell migration *in vitro* was analysed on subventricular explants from 1-d-old normal mice (NCAM +/+) , heterozygous (NCAM +/-) or knock out mice (NCAM -/-) cultured in Matrigel, in 15 presence of the mimetic peptides (p65, p21, p66), different form of p65 peptide (cyclic, linear, linear and acetylated), the control peptides (reverse p65 and reverse p66 and p22) or endosialidase N. The results are illustrated in figures 4 to 7.

- Figure 4 (A to I) show that the addition of p65 and p66 peptides to the culture increases the rate of migration of the neuronal precursors and a modification 20 of their chain-like arrangement (C and F). These effects were not found with the reverse peptides (A and D) and were PSA-dependent since they were abolished by endo N treatment (B and E).

These results were confirmed by the quantitative analysis (G and H) demonstrating that p65 and p66 induce a significant increase in the rate of migration 25 of the neuronal precursors (+ 40 % and + 26 % respectively at 0.4 µM, compared with the control without peptide), whereas endo N decreases it (- 21 %, compared with the control without peptide).

Dose-response curve of p65 (I) shows that the optimal effect on cell migration is observed starting from and above 0.4 µM peptide.

30 - Figure 5 show that cyclisation of p65 is a prerequisite to p65 promoting effect since the corresponding amino acid sequences in a linear form, either

N-acetylated or not, are unable to stimulate cell migration.

- Figure 6 show that p65 effect is dependant upon PSA expression since a significant reduction of the precursor migration was observed in the NCAM -/- mice by comparison to the NCAM +/- mice, in the presence of reverse peptide or p65 peptide ; the effect were comparable in endo N treated NCAM +/- mice and NCAM -/- mice and the p65 did not reverse the impaired migration in the NCAM -/- mice.

- Figure 7 show that p65 induce a significant increase in the rate of migration of the neuronal precursors, compared to the corresponding control peptide (reverse p65).

10 By contrast, p21 induces a significant decrease in the rate of migration of the neuronal precursors, compared to the corresponding control peptide (p22 peptide) ; the decrease is comparable to that observed in the endo N treated cells.

These results demonstrate that the mimetic peptides are able to stimulate (p65) or inhibit (p21) cell migration in a PSA-dependant manner.

15 2.4) Effect of PSA mimetic peptides on cell migration *in vivo* (figure 8)

The effect of PSA mimetic peptides on cell migration *in vivo* was analysed by grafting tissue and evaluating migration of SVZ cells. Small pieces of SVZ tissue (100 µm diameter) from 1-day-old GFP mice were grafted in the SVZ area of adult mice, in the presence of p65, p65 reverse peptide or in the absence of peptide.

20 The results are illustrated in figure 8.

Figure 8 show that the presence of p65 peptide increases significantly the number of GFP positive cells migrating to the olfactory bulb (via the Rostral Migration Stream or RMS), by comparison with the control. This effect was observed as early as 3 days post-engraftment (figure 8E). These results were confirmed by the 25 quantitative analysis showing that the number of GFP positive cells present in the olfactory bulb 3 days after the graft is increased 17 times in the presence of p65, by comparison with the control (figure 8G).

These effects were PSA-dependent since they were abolished in NCAM knock-out mice.

30 These results demonstrate that the mimetic peptides are able to increase the migration of PSA positive cells.

CLAIMS

1°) Peptide, characterized in that it presents a sequence consisting of 5 to 30 amino acid residues, preferably 9 to 15, most preferably about 12 amino acid residues, said sequence comprising a B epitope recognized by an anti-poly- α 2,8 sialic acid antibody.

2°) Peptide according to claim 1, characterized in that it is linear or cyclic.

3°) Peptide according to claim 1 or claim 2, characterized in that it comprises an amino acid sequence which is selected from the group consisting of the sequences SEQ ID NO: 1 to 26, corresponding respectively to DSPLVPFIDFHP, LWQPPLIPGIDF, QIEPWFTPEDFP, TRLAPLVFPLDY, SWLQMPWALVRT, EIHLRMIKQITI, WHLEYMWWRWPRL, LIEQRLPKHILT, YETSSSRLLAYA, TLASQLSNTSAY, SDQGVNGWSNSP, ,WHINWNLWAPASPT, WHWQWTPWSIQP, IKSPLTWLVPPD, SHLDLSTGHRTS, CYPLNPEVYHCG, CWPLSHSVTIVCG, CSSVTAWTTGCG, CYMASGVFLCG, CWPLGPSTYICG, CSLIASMETGCG, CSKIASMETGCG, CYIGDPPFNPCG, CWPLGDSTVICG CPLRLAFTFGCG and CTRMSHGYWICG, and the functional derivatives thereof.

4°) Peptide according to claim 3, characterized in that it consists of a sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO: 1 to SEQ ID NO: 26.

5°) Peptide according to claim 4, characterized in that it is a linear peptide consisting of SEQ ID NO: 1.

6°) Peptide according to claim 4, characterized in that it is a cyclic peptide in which the side chain of the cysteine residue at position 1 of SEQ ID NO: 18 or SEQ ID NO: 22 is attached covalently to the side chain residue of the cysteine at 25 position 11 of SEQ ID NO: 18 or SEQ ID NO: 22 via a disulfide bond.

7°) Peptide complex, characterized in that it comprises several identical or different peptides according to any of claims 1 to 6 linked by covalent or non-covalent bonds.

8°) Polynucleotide, characterized in that it encodes the peptide according to any of claims 1 to 6 or the peptide complex according to claim 7.

9°) Recombinant vector, characterized in that it comprises a poly-

nucleotide encoding the peptide according to any of claims 1 to 6 or the peptide complex according to claim 7.

10°) Host cell, characterized in that it is transformed by a recombinant vector according to claim 9.

5 11°) Pharmaceutical composition, characterized in that it comprises an effective amount of the peptide according to any of claims 1 to 6, or the peptide complex according to claim 7, optionally in a combination with a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

10 12°) Use of the peptide of any of claims 1 to 6, or the peptide complex according to claim 7, for the preparation of a medicament for the prevention and/or the treatment of a pathological condition selected from the group consisting of neurodegenerative diseases, brain and spine lesions, age-related learning and memory problems and cancer.

ABSTRACT

The invention relates to poly- α 2,8-sialic acid (PSA) mimetic peptide able to modulate specifically PSA-dependent NCAM functions *in vitro* and *in vivo*, characterized in that it presents a sequence consisting of 5 to 30 amino acid residues, 5 preferably 9 to 15, most preferably about 12 amino acid residues, said sequence comprising a B epitope recognized by an anti-poly- α 2,8 sialic acid antibody, and to its application for the treatment of neurodegenerative diseases, brain and spine lesions, age-related learning and memory problems, and cancer.

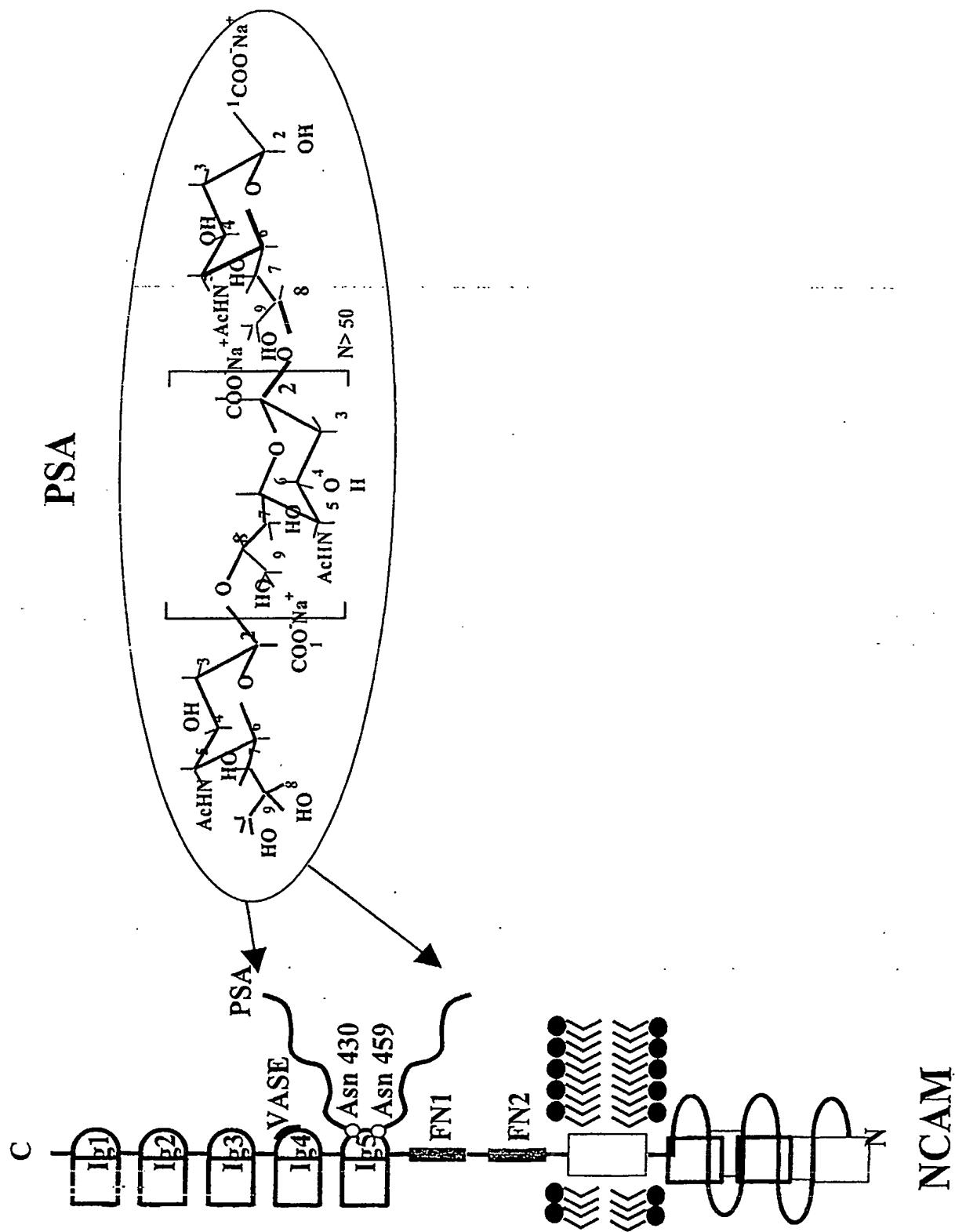


Figure 1

NCAM

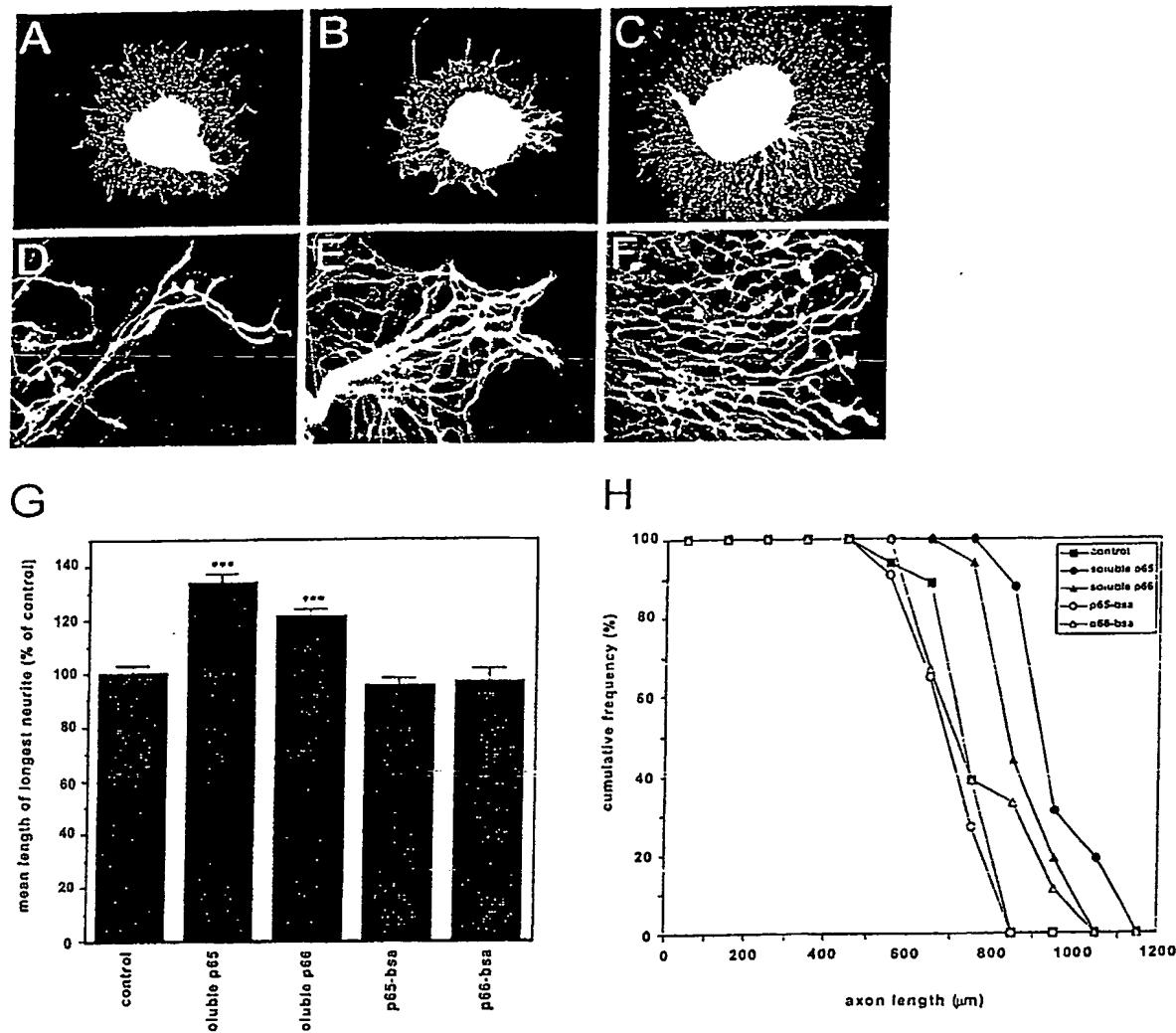


Figure 2

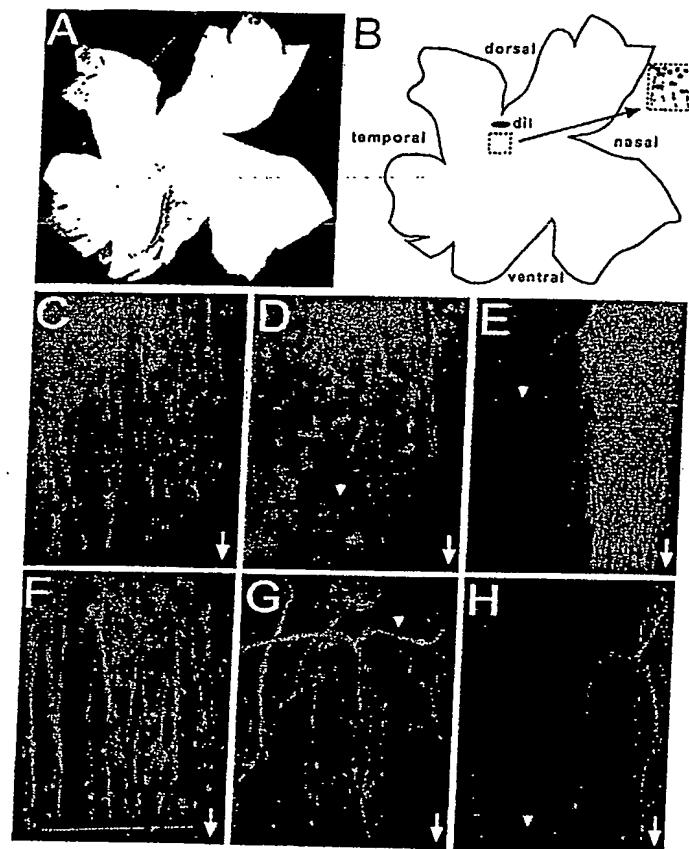
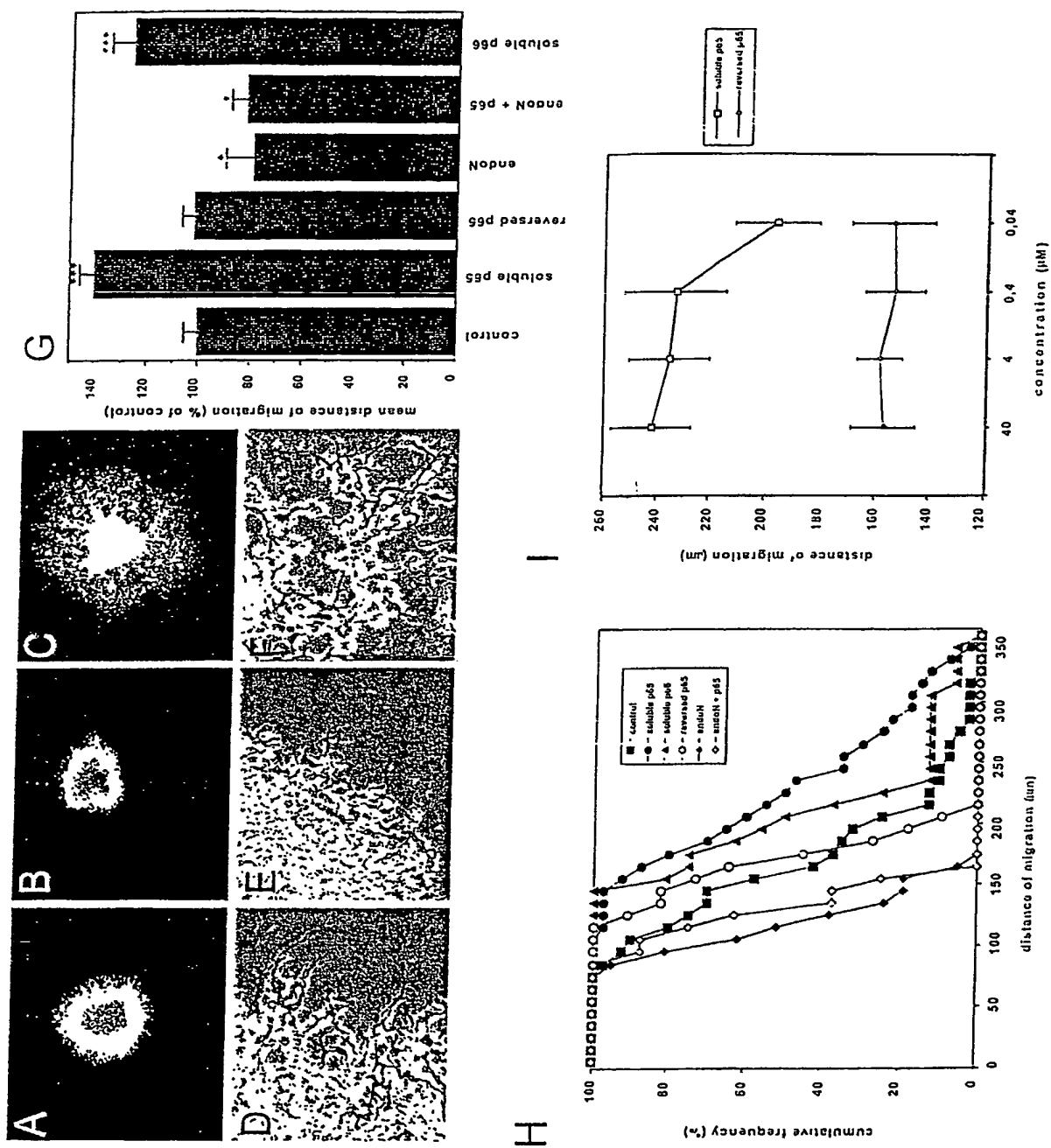


Figure 3

**Figure 4**

5/8

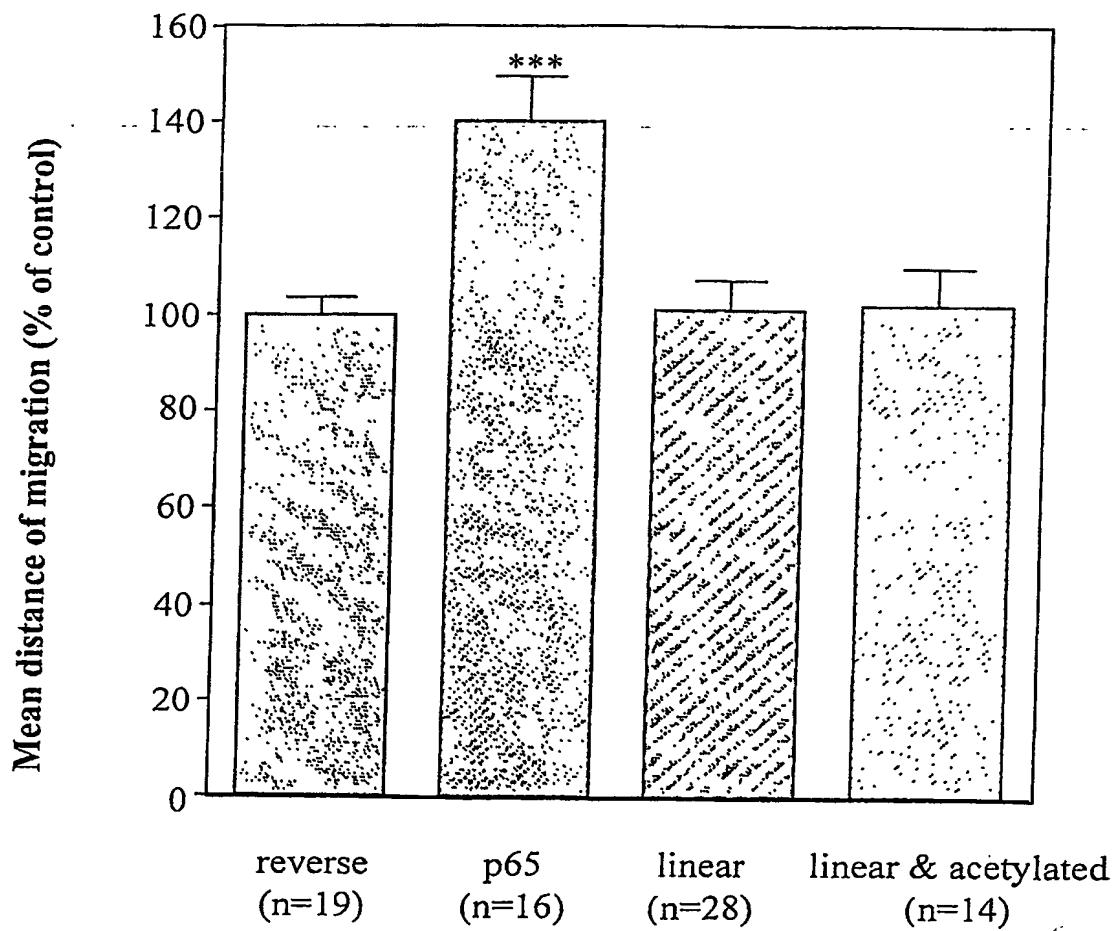


Figure 5

6/8

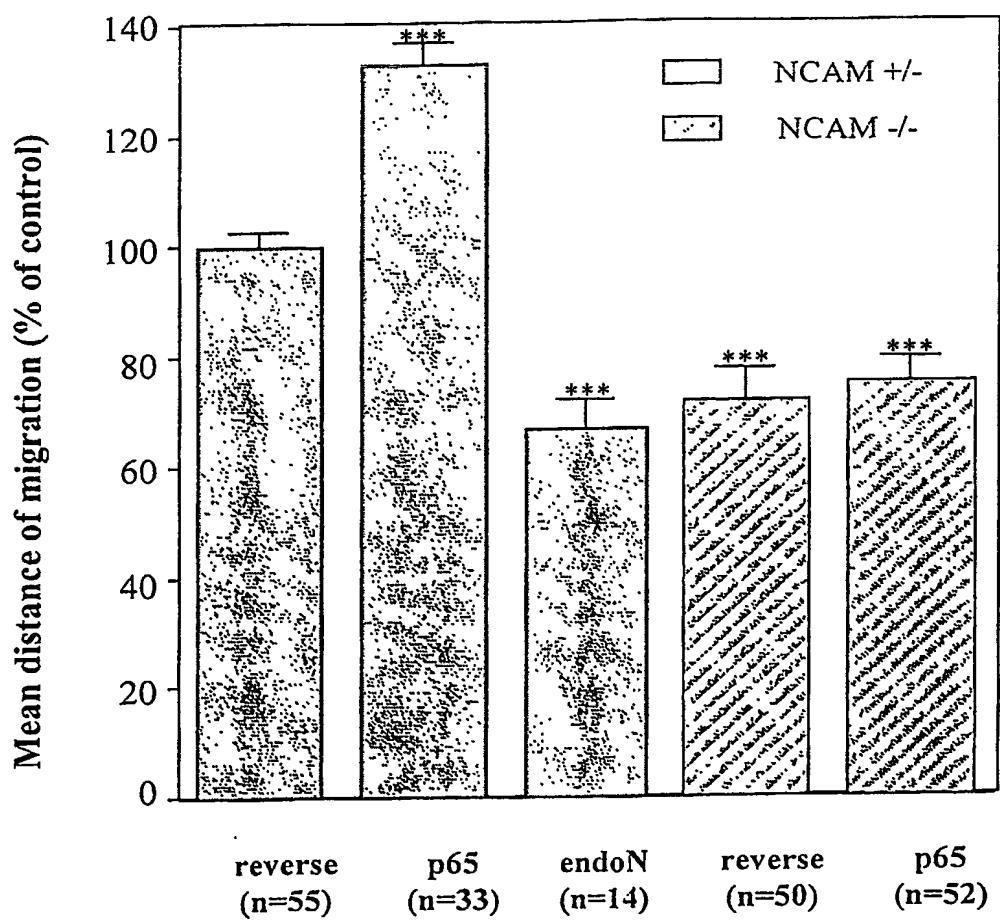


Figure 6

7/8

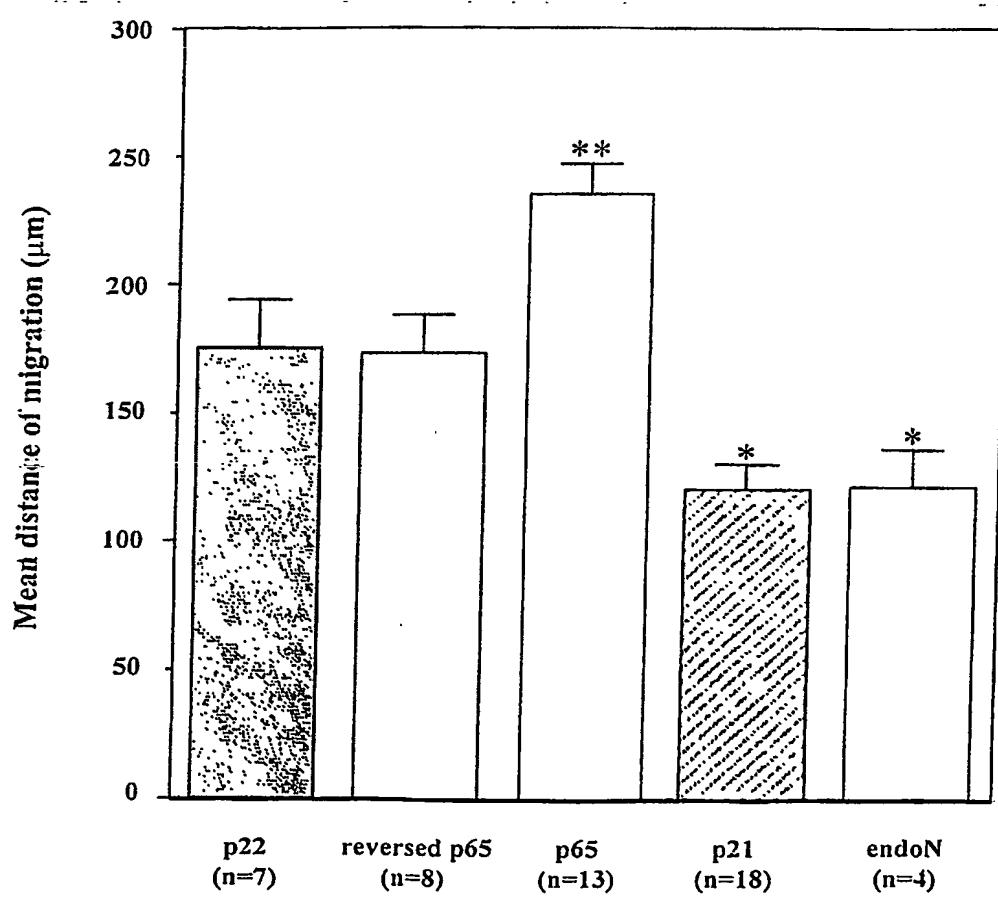


Figure 7

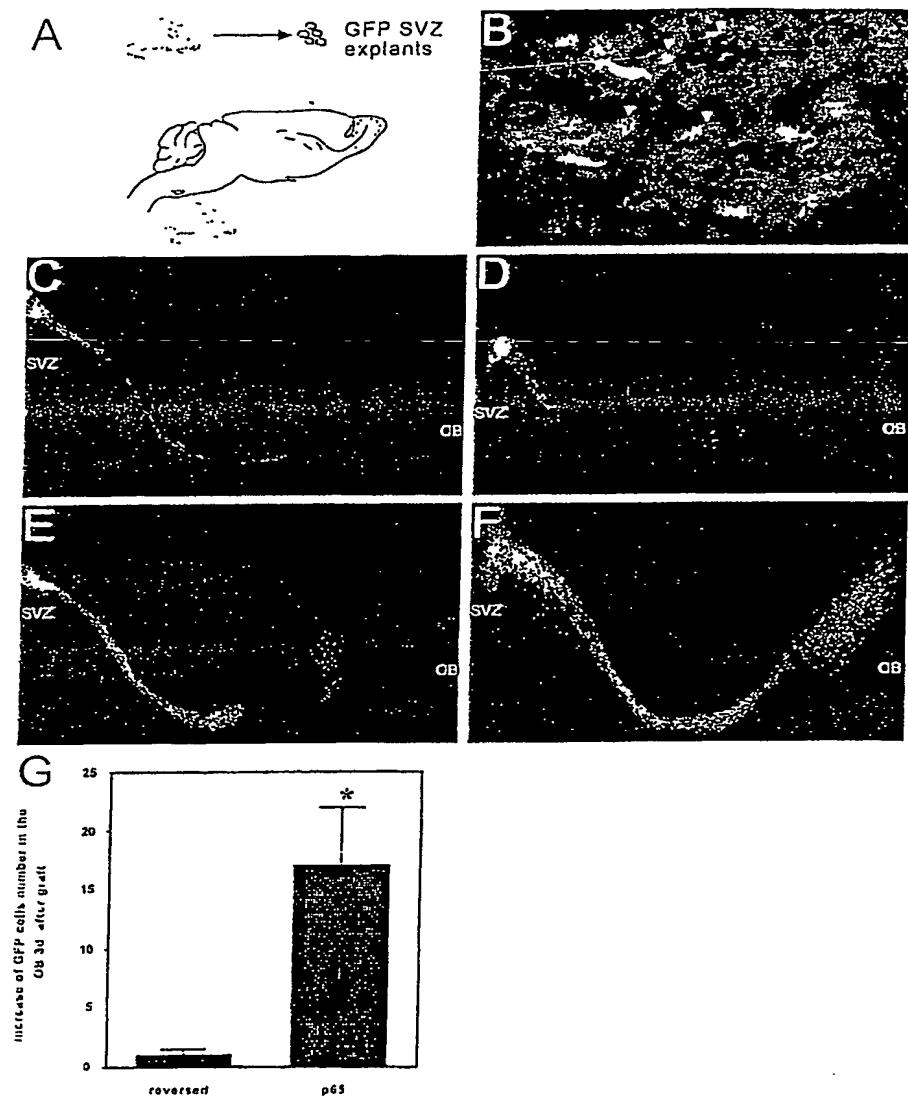


Figure 8

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SEQUENCE LISTING

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UNIVERSITE DE LA MEDITERRANEE AIX MARSEILLE II
SCHAFER-N
UNIVERSITAET HAMBURG

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7

8

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